

Bodhisattvas attain the last moments of the path of preparation (which is a union of calm abiding and special insight conceptually realizing emptiness), the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing, and the path of release of the path of seeing in a single meditative session.

Lasts moments of the great supreme Dharma of the path of preparation	Path of seeing		
	Uninterrupted path	Path of release	Subsequent attainment paths
Union of calm abiding and special insight that <b>conceptually</b> realizes emptiness	Union of calm abiding and special insight that <b>directly</b> realizes emptiness and eliminates intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions	Union of calm abiding and special insight that <b>directly</b> realizes emptiness and attains the elimination of intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions	Paths of seeing that do not directly realize emptiness, such as Bodhicitta, great compassion, wisdom that realizes impermanence, etc.

▼  
one meditative session

## ii. The subsequent attainment paths of the path of seeing

Subsequent attainment paths arise after the meditative equipoise paths of the path of seeing (i.e. after the uninterrupted path and the path of release), which is the reason for calling them “*subsequent attainment*”. These are paths of seeing which do not directly realize emptiness and to which conventional truths appear. Examples of these paths are Bodhicitta, compassion, generosity, the wisdom directly realizing subtle impermanence, the wisdom *conceptually* realizing emptiness, etc. in the continua of Bodhisattvas on the path of seeing.

However, when practitioners who have attained the subsequent attainment paths of the Mahayana path of seeing enter once again into a meditative equipoise that directly realizes emptiness and serves as the antidote to the coarsest *innate* afflictive obstructions, they cease to be Bodhisattvas on the path of seeing and become Bodhisattvas on the Mahayana path of meditation.

Hence, the first moment of the meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness, which irrevocably eliminates the coarsest *innate* afflictive obstructions and is generated after the subsequent attainment paths of the Mahayana path of seeing, marks the first moment of the Mahayana path of meditation.

Path of seeing		
Meditative equipoise paths		Subsequent attainment paths
Uninterrupted path	Path of release	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meditative equipoise that directly realizes emptiness and eliminates intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meditative equipoise that directly realizes emptiness and achieves the cessation of intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Paths of seeing that do not realize emptiness directly and to which conventional truths appear. For instance, Bodhicitta, compassion, generosity, the wisdom that directly realizes subtle impermanence, the wisdom that conceptually realizes emptiness, etc. in the continua of Bodhisattvas on the path of seeing.</li> </ul>

The most frequently discussed and debated stage of the path of seeing is the stage of meditative equipoise that consists of the uninterrupted path and the path of release.

An important concept related to these two types of meditative equipoise is the concept of the *sixteen instants of the path of seeing*. The following explanation of this concept is provided as an introduction to

the presentations of the path of seeing in Haribhadra's *Commentary Illuminating the Meaning*, Gyaltsab je's *Ornament of the Essence*, and Lama Tsongkhapa's *Golden Rosary* - cited below.

### The sixteen instants of the path of seeing

The sixteen instants of the path of seeing constitute: (1) the *eight forbearances* and (2) the *eight knowledges*, with the uninterrupted path of seeing corresponding to the *eight forbearances* and the path of release corresponding to the *eight knowledges*.

#### The eight forbearances

As explained above, both the uninterrupted path and the path of release are meditative equipoise paths that directly realize the lack of true existence of *all* phenomena. This means that these two types of awareness focus on *all* phenomena and directly realize the emptiness of *all* phenomena. As the four noble truths are included in 'all phenomena' these two meditative equipoise paths also focus on (1) **truths of suffering** and directly realize the emptiness of truths of suffering. They focus on (2) **truths of origin** and directly realize the emptiness of the truths of origin. They focus on (3) **truths of cessation** and directly realize the emptiness of truths of cessation. They focus on (4) **truths of the path** and directly realize the emptiness of truths of the path. Likewise, they focus on (5) **awarenesses that directly realize the emptiness of the truths of suffering** and directly realize the emptiness of those awarenesses. They focus on (6) **awarenesses that directly realize the emptiness of the truths of origin** and directly realize the emptiness of those awarenesses. They focus on (7) **awarenesses that directly realize the emptiness of the truths of cessation** and directly realize the emptiness of those awarenesses. And they focus on (8) **awarenesses that directly realize the emptiness of the truths of the path** and directly realize the emptiness of those awarenesses. In short, both the uninterrupted path and the path of release of the path of seeing focus on the four noble truths and the above-mentioned four awarenesses, and they directly realize the lack of true existence of those eight focal objects.

Therefore, from the perspective of the eight focal objects the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing is eightfold, i.e. it can be categorized into what is called the *eight forbearances*. These eight uninterrupted paths of seeing or *eight forbearances* can be sub-divided into:

- a) Four **Dharma-forbearances**
- b) Four **subsequent-forbearances**

The focal objects of the four **Dharma-forbearances** are the four noble truths. So the four **Dharma-forbearances** focus on:

- (1) The truth of suffering
- (2) The truths of origin
- (3) The truths of cessation
- (4) The truths of the path

and directly realize the lack of true existence of those four - and of all other phenomena as well.

In brief, the four **Dharma-forbearances** of the path of seeing are:

1. The uninterrupted path from the perspective of directly realizing the lack of true existence of **truths of suffering**
2. The uninterrupted path from the perspective of directly realizing the lack of true existence of **truths of origin**
3. The uninterrupted path from the perspective of directly realizing the lack of true existence of **truths of cessation**
4. The uninterrupted path from the perspective of directly realizing the lack of true existence of **truths of the path**

The focal objects of the four **subsequent-forbearances** of the path of seeing are the four **Dharma-forbearances**. Thus, the four **subsequent-forbearances** focus on:

1. The Dharma-forbearance that directly realizes the lack of true existence of truths of suffering (i.e. the uninterrupted path from the perspective of directly realizing the lack of true existence of truths of suffering)

